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UNCLAS HELSINKI 000055

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SUBJECT: LONDON CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN: FINNISH GOALS

REF: SECSTATE 03627

1. (SBU) Responding to reftel demarche, MFA officials expressed their overall agreement with our stated goals and were grateful to be kept apprised of the US position. Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Mari Kiviniemi will represent Finland at the London Conference on Afghanistan, where she will commit Finland to a significant 5-year pledge. Our interlocutors estimate this pledge to be approximately EUR 10M (USD 12M) per year. The Finns also intend to continue their military presence in Afghanistan -- including possibly taking over leadership of a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in 2007 -- as well as their contribution toward narcotics control and good governance.

2. (SBU) Ambassador Mikko Pyhala, Head of the MFA Unit for South Asia, commented that he and his colleagues at the Foreign Ministry were "so pleased--no, thrilled--that Secretary Rice referred to Finland's PRT's in Afghanistan

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during her meeting with Ambassador Pekka Lintu." (Comment: His enthusiasm was a reminder of the importance Finland attaches to its commitment to Afghanistan, which remains one of the largest recipients of Finnish development assistance. End comment.)

3. (U) Pyhala recommended that the third pillar of the Afghanistan Compact be amended to reflect economic and social development, "which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable."

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